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# The Higher Criticism.....

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

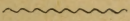
**T**HIS brief paper on "The Higher Criticism," originated in the request of the Alumni Association of Wycliffe College, before whom it was read in its original form. It was subsequently re-cast and delivered at the opening of the Session in Wycliffe College, October 6th, 1903. It is now, with some additions, published at the request of friends. While the argument might have been strengthened by expansion and a fuller treatment of some of the points involved, it was felt that the brevity of treatment would make it more efficient for its purpose. It is set forth with a deep sense of its imperfections and with earnest prayer that it may prove helpful to some in this time of stress and disquietude.

J. P. S.

January, 1904.

100

# THE HIGHER CRITICISM



This is a large subject to attempt to discuss within the brief compass of a lecture. It will not be possible to deal in detail with all the hypotheses and arguments of the critics. What I shall attempt to do will be :

First, to explain what is meant by the Higher Criticism, and to state concisely the theory of the Old Testament put forth by those popularly known as "Higher Critics."

Secondly, to outline some of the reasons why we cannot accept their theory, and why we are confident it must be ultimately rejected by the Christian Church.

I do not forget that the so-called "Higher Critics" of the Old Testament, do not all occupy the same religious ground. Some are avowedly the opponents of all Revelation, and it was among them that these theories originated and now find their chief support. There are others who claim to hold fast their Evangelical faith while they adopt the methods and to a large extent the conclusions of their rationalistic co-workers. I admire their scholarship and their industry. I gladly admit their sincerity and good intentions. But, I am constrained to think that they are



attempting what is impossible, and that sooner or later they must either retrace their steps or advance to the more logical and consistent position of the Radical School, as some of them have already done to the amazement and sorrow of their friends.

At this point let me say that I shall be obliged to limit my references and illustrations to the Pentateuch, which is, after all, the key to the position, and forms the basis of the new critical reconstruction of the Old Testament.

## I. THE NEW THEORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The present popular use of the term "Higher Criticism" is a departure from the early and legitimate use of the term. As first used in the latter part of the eighteenth century it marked an obvious distinction between what was described as the Lower Criticism and the Higher Criticism. The Lower or Textual Criticism embraces all such studies as relate to the letter or text of the sacred writings, the MSS., versions, various readings, determination of the correct text, etc. The Higher or Literary Criticism includes the studies relating to the style, structure, sources and literary characteristics of the Scriptures. Both are very necessary and important branches of Biblical study, and both have their recognized place in the curriculum of every efficient School of Theology. As Bishop Moule has said: "The most earnest defender of the supernatural character of the Scriptures may be, and very often is, as diligent a Higher Critic as the extremest anti-supernaturalist."

But alongside of this original and scientific use of the term there has unfortunately grown up an irregular

and popular use of it which has, in the language of the day, almost superseded the former. It has to a large extent become identified in popular thought with a particular school of Higher Criticism which derives its distinctive character from the methods it follows and the conclusions it reaches in regard to the Old Testament. It is in this latter and inaccurate sense that, under protest, I use the terms "Higher Criticism" and "Higher Critics" in this lecture. Only I trust that no one will fall into one or other of two prevalent mistakes, and either conclude that the whole subject is a new discovery of certain critics and that prior to their investigations the Scriptures were never rightly studied or understood; or, in alarm at the radical results of rationalistic criticism, condemn all higher criticism as a thing inherently evil and to be avoided by all devout scholars. The fault does not lie in the studies legitimately comprehended under the term "Higher Criticism," but in the way in which they are often pursued and in the methods and prepossessions of the critics themselves. There is a way that is reverent, legitimate and most helpful to the right understanding of the Scriptures. There is a way that is irreverent, illegitimate and destructive of the Christian faith.

In order to see more clearly what is involved in the radical critical position, let me first briefly state what has been for nearly two thousand years the position of the Catholic Church.

We accept the Old Testament as a written record of God's Revelations prior to the coming of Christ, given through prophets, whom He raised up, and addressed to the people of Israel. It was God Him-

self who spoke\* by His Spirit, and He spoke "at sundry times and in divers portions" as He in His wisdom determined. These various portions stand in clearly defined relations to each other, and together form one organic structure. They possess unity in diversity; and that unity is conserved first by the one Spirit who spake in the Prophets; and secondly, by the one supreme Subject of the Revelations given through them—Christ our Lord, who is the sum and centre of the whole; as He Himself said: "These are they which testify of Me."

Of this great structure the Pentateuch is the foundation. All the other books depend upon it and bear witness to it. And throughout the Pentateuch, as through the rest of the Old Testament, there is a plan and a purpose. Its unity can be conclusively established, as has been believed by the Jews and the Christian Church from the beginning.

But in recent years there has been put forward †a

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\*At least two thousand six hundred times in the Old Testament we have the direct testimony that what the writer spoke is what God at first spoke, given in such solemn affirmations as these: "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken." "Thus saith the Lord." "The Word of the Lord came" Thus the Divine autograph shines forth upon the pages of Scripture.

†Modern rationalistic criticism of the Old Testament has its precursors in Spinoza, "the father of modern pantheism" and Richard Simon, a Roman Catholic, who in 1670 and 1678, respectively, published attacks upon the unity and Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. The originator of the documentary theories was a French physician and freethinker, named Astruc, who in 1753 published his analysis of Genesis.

But these were only repeating in new forms the doubts and denials of Celsus and Porphyry and the Gnostics of the 4th century. In spite of them all the Christian Church held fast its belief in the Old Testament, as a theologian noted for moderation says: "From the days of Celsus and Porphyry the argument of unbelief has been in various forms maintained. Unfriendly scrutiny has done its best and its worst. . . . The very



new theory of the Old Testament and of the Pentateuch in particular, of which the great outstanding feature is its disintegration of the sacred books, and, following upon that, its reconstruction of the history of Israel.

According to this new divisive theory, the Pentateuch, or rather the Hexateuch, that is, the Pentateuch and the book of Joshua, as the critics place them together, is not one work possessed of unity and completeness, but a combination of documents, the work of wholly different writers and belonging to widely separated times.

I shall follow one of the latest accounts of its formation as given by the expounders of the new theory.

For many centuries, we are told, probably the only records of the past were those contained in song and saga, recited at religious festivals and preserved in the memory of bards and sages. It was not until the eighth or ninth century B.C., some six hundred years after the time of Moses, that attempts were made to collect these so as to form a connected written history. The oldest portions of the Hexateuch may date as far back as the end of Solomon's reign, about 1000 B.C. Among these scanty fragments may have been the Blessing of Jacob, Gen. 49; the Book of the Covenant, Exod. 21-23; part of Balaam's Discourses, Num. 23-24; with a few other verses. These were incorporated in the larger work which began to take shape about 900 B.C., in the reign of Jehoshaphat, when a story-teller, who lived in Judah, put into writing the

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problems, the very difficulties, that are discussed now, both about the Old Testament and the New Testament, exercised the minds of our predecessors." Rainy: *The Bible and Criticism* p. 159.

early legends of his people. From his habit of calling the God of Israel by the name of Jehovah this writer is called the Jehovist.—J. But his writing underwent two recensions, one a hundred and fifty years later and another fifty years later still. So that there were at least three writers of this portion, viz., J<sup>1</sup>, J<sup>2</sup>, J<sup>3</sup>.

About a hundred years after the first Jehovist did his work in Judah, there arose in the northern kingdom of Israel under the Jeroboam II, another unknown story-teller who wrote down for his people an account of the legends and stories of their early history. Because his favorite name for the God of Israel was Elohim, he was called the Elohist—E. His work a hundred years later, was revised by a second Elohist. And either this second Elohist, or some other unknown writer, skillfully combined the Jehovist and Elohist documents, which had hitherto no literary connection, into one narrative deftly woven together.

Soon afterwards, about 625 B.C., in the reign of Josiah, there was found in the temple at Jerusalem by Hilkiyah the Priest, a book which he declared to be "The book of the law of the Lord, given by Moses," 2 Chron. 34: 14. But the critics give a different account of it. It was not the law of Moses, but a new book, written, some say, by Hilkiyah himself, who hid it where he found it, or by some prophetic friend of his, or a little earlier by some unknown person in the reign of Manasseh. This writing was the book of Deuteronomy, not as we now have it, but portions of it, although as to the extent of these the critics are not agreed. The original work passed through two revisions, in some respects not in harmony with each other. These were finally combined and harmonized,

and with various additions constitute our present book of Deuteronomy. But whenever and however written, it was put forth in the name of Moses, and various touches added to make the compilation appear to be a genuine work of the great Law-giver.

We have seen that already the Jehovist and Elohist documents had been combined into one known as J.E. This was next combined with the revised and completed Deuteronomy. Thus we now have JED. But still a fourth document is necessary. It is called the Priestly writing—P. In a general way it corresponds with the ritual and sacrificial system set forth in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. The first brief draft of it appeared in the middle of the Exile. In the course of time it was followed by another law-book of the same order P<sup>2</sup>, partly historical and partly legislative, which formed a frame-work for P<sup>1</sup>. During the next fifty years these were combined, and then various editors P<sup>3</sup>, P<sup>4</sup>, P<sup>5</sup>, and others too numerous to mention, revised and added to and completed the work. This work manufactured in Babylon was brought to Jerusalem by Ezra about 458 B.C., and fourteen years later, in 444, publicly proclaimed as the Law of the Lord. In a solemn convocation of the returned Exiles Ezra for the first time exhibited this Priest code, drawn up in Babylon, and told the people that it was the book of the Law of Moses which the Lord had commanded to Israel (Ezra 7 : 10).

And at last about forty years later, about 400 B.C., the final step was taken. Some great unknown took the Priest code and combined it with JED., adding various particulars, such as the account of Creation, a list of the Patriarchs, one of the versions of the

Deluge tradition, a Table of Nations, and other items, and gave it to his people as the original history of Israel and the Law-book of Moses, the Man of God. Such is the Critics' account of the production of the Hexateuch.\*

Of course there are numerous differences as to minor points (and, as we shall presently see, on some of the greater points), but the description just given substantially represents the views of the great body of radical critics. It discloses, however, only in part the complexity of this strange process of production, which includes revisions and corrections freely introduced wherever the exigencies of the situation require them.

According to this theory the earlier portions of the Pentateuch were reduced to writing some six or seven hundred years after the time of Moses, and the greater part of it was not written until upwards of a thousand years after his death.†

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\*The theory can be found in a cruder form in "The Age of Reason," by Thomas Paine (1795).

Paine writes: "I shall produce such evidence as even a priest cannot deny that the Bible is not entitled to credit, and is not the Word of God. Having promised these things I proceed to examine the authenticity of the Bible, and I begin with the five books of Moses, so called, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. My intention is to show that these books are spurious, that Moses is not the author of them, that they were not written in the time of Moses, not till hundreds of years after, that they are an attempted history of the life of Moses and his times, written by some ignorant or stupid pretenders to authorship centuries after his death, as men now write what is supposed to have happened thousands of years ago. The evidence I shall produce is from the books themselves. I will meet the advocates of the Bible on their own ground, and oppose them with their own weapon—the Bible" (Age of Reason, P. ii: 1-5).

†That is, according to the chronology of Archbishop Usher. The tendency now is to shorten the period between Moses and Christ.

I will now outline some of the reasons why we cannot accept this theory of the Old Testament set forth by the radical critics.

## II. THE NOVELTY OF THE THEORY.

The history of the theory itself furnishes our first reason against its acceptance, for it discloses its novelty and instability.

The very demand made upon us to reject the view of the Old Testament held both by the Jewish and the Christian Church for more than two thousand years should make us pause. And when we are asked to accept in its stead a theory not only recent in its production, but without a parallel in the whole history of literature, it is only reasonable to exact from its advocates the most searching enquiry and the most convincing proofs.

When we enquire into the origin and history of this novel theory we find our caution abundantly justified. Many people are under the impression that what is now brought forward with such confidence is the self-same theory which has been discussed and elaborated during the last one hundred and fifty years or more; that its history might be compared to that of some great scientific truth, such as the law of gravity, which once discovered and enunciated has been verified and sustained by the observations and demonstrations of succeeding generations of mathematicians and astronomers.

On the contrary, what the history of this theory of the Old Testament discloses is a series of speculations most divergent in their character, and culminating in one which is the complete reversal of propositions



accepted as essential and incontrovertible in all the theories that preceded it.

In the attacks upon the unity and Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, three stages may be discriminated.\* To the first belong the crude objections and speculations of the earlier rationalism. It was denied that Moses wrote, or could have written, the Pentateuch. This denial was based partly upon assumptions, long since refuted, as to the later origin of the art of writing in Canaan, and the low condition of literary attainment; and partly upon alleged anachronisms and contradictions, which in part have been disproved by later criticism and by research, and in part re-appear in new connections where they can be more effectively examined.

The second stage is marked by its distinctly literary character. We find its starting-point in the speculations of a French physician, Astruc, a man of considerable learning but of profligate life, who in 1753 made the first attempt to decompose the book of Genesis into constituent documents, distinguished by their use of the names of God, Jehovah and Elohim. This document hypothesis was further elaborated and some five or six different theories were set forth in turn, each to the confusion of that which preceded it. Amidst all the diversities and contradictions of these speculations two points were generally accepted

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\*It is not meant that these are three distinct and successive stages decisively marked off chronologically from each other. But we find three factors successively dominating the criticism. At first the criticism was chiefly historical. Then through Astruc the literary element became prominent. Still later a naturalistic philosophy became the controlling influence, but not to the exclusion of the historical and literary considerations and methods.

as established beyond possibility of refutation : viz., first, that the Elohist document formed the groundwork of the Pentateuch and was the oldest and most reliable portion, while the Jehovist document which fitted into the former, was more legendary and least credible ; secondly, that the book of Deuteronomy was the latest and crowning portion of the Pentateuch.

Observe carefully what now took place. Up to this time the criticism was pre-eminently literary. Its dissection of the Pentateuch was altogether based upon the use of words, chiefly of Elohim and Jehovah, upon peculiarities of diction, upon alleged inconsistencies and contradictions in the narrative, and similar considerations. But these internal criteria proved to be vague and uncertain. There was nothing to fix the age of the different documents. Beyond the two points I have mentioned there was no agreement among the critics.

Now a great and radical change ushers us into the third stage of this critical history, which may be called the evolutionary stage. This originated\* chiefly in the speculations of Graf, first published in 1866. He maintained that the body of laws in the middle books of the Pentateuch was a very late production, elaborated and placed in its present position after the Babylonian exile. But this body of laws formed a part of what the critics had hitherto maintained to be the oldest portion of the Pentateuch. This portion, made up both of history and of laws, had

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\* What afterwards came to be known as the Graf-Wellhausen Theory was first suggested by Vatke in 1830, and more elaborately drawn out by Edward Reuss in 1833. Graf was a pupil of Reuss.

been declared by the critics to be marked, both in its historical and legislative parts, by special characteristics which made them one work.

Accordingly, when Graf announced his revolutionary change of theory, his opponents replied: How could a man who wrote a history in the ninth or eighth century B.C. write a body of laws four or five hundred years later? So Graf was compelled to take another step in advance. As he had moved the body of laws down to the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, he was obliged to move the writing of the history down to the same date, with what consequences to the history we may see further on. Thus the Elohist document, which had hitherto been considered to be the fundamental document, was now made the latest portion of the Pentateuch. Old Testament criticism turned a complete somersault and actually reversed its former basal position, and the book of Deuteronomy, hitherto regarded as the latest and crowning portion of the Pentateuch, was relegated to a prior position. This new theory at first met with strenuous opposition, but in 1878 Wellhausen, by his scholarly presentation of it, secured for it almost universal acceptance in Germany, whence it has been carried into Britain and America.

In this latest form of the radical theory, the literary criteria previously utilized still hold their place; but they are subordinate to the philosophical doctrine which became the controlling factor and which brought about the remarkable *volte face* which marks off the present stage in the critical history from all that preceded it.\*

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\* "As a matter of fact all histories of revelation which

This controlling factor is simply the application of the Hegelian doctrine of historical evolution to the literature and religion of Israel. All history, including that of Israel, is explained as an evolution or development which takes place in a purely natural way. In like manner the religion and literature of Israel were formed by a process of natural evolution apart from any supernatural interposition. They are the result of the operation of natural laws and not of special and supernatural revelations. The position of each portion of the Old Testament is determined by its place in this natural development. For example, in the case of the Psalms, it is alleged that few or none of them can belong to the age of David, because the low condition of the spiritual development of Israel at that time would not permit of such compositions.

There is no finality in this Grat-Wellhausen theory. Already its claims are challenged and its weaknesses are disclosed, not only by evangelical theologians but also by the younger Higher Critics of Germany; and as it swallowed up its critical predecessors, so we may look to see it devoured in its turn by some new offspring of critical speculation. Driver himself candidly admits that he cannot fix with any confidence the earliest date to which the documents may belong. "Conclusive criteria fail us." "All things considered a date in the early centuries of the Monarchy would seem not to be unsuitable for J and E; but it must remain an open question whether both

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have made any mark in recent years have been constructed on the more or less avowed principle that they fit into an evolutionary framework."—DR. COBB, *Theology Old and New*, p 79.

may not in reality be older." Could a more uncertain conclusion be put forward? If J and E are possibly earlier, how much earlier? And what has Driver shown to prevent our acceptance of what has been the constant belief of the Church that the Pentateuch belongs substantially to the Mosaic age?

The late Professor Dillmann, of Berlin, who died in 1894, himself a Higher Critic, than whom none ever stood higher in Old Testament criticism, expressly opposed some of the salient features of the Graf-Wellhausen theory and returned on these points to the older critical view which assigned the Priest Code to a date as early as two or three centuries before the Exile and much earlier than the book of Deuteronomy.

There is no unanimity among the critics, and when we find such wide divergence among them we may reasonably conclude that the grounds upon which these divergent judgments are made must be exceedingly precarious.

Thus at the outset of our inquiry we have found the initial objection to the theory in its novelty and instability as displayed in its history.

Now let us turn to the theory itself. We have found three factors successively operating in its development. Each of these brings before us a corresponding line of enquiry: first, as to the literary method followed in the construction of the theory; secondly, the bearing of the critical theory upon the history of Israel and the historical credibility of the Pentateuch; thirdly, the relations of the theory to religion and to religious truths held by the Christian Church to be vital and essential.



### III. THE LITERARY METHOD OF THE CRITICS.

Let us now consider the first named of these three lines of enquiry, viz : the literary method followed by the Higher Critics. Here we find the second reason for refusing to accept their theory. The literary analysis of the Pentateuch upon which the theory is largely based, proves itself to be arbitrary and delusive.

The basis of this analysis is found in the use of the Divine names—Jehovah and Elohim, which, as already pointed out, was alleged to distinguish different original documents. Other considerations were brought in ; such as the continuity of the Jehovistic and the Elohist sections, the parallel narratives or doublets, the diversity of style, diction, etc., which were alleged to characterize the different documents. But all these were subordinate to the basal criterion. To follow out these points in detail would require a volume. I must, therefore, confine myself to two general considerations.

1. This method of literary analysis, being purely subjective, chiefly a matter of suggestion and conjecture and literary taste, and without any external data to control it, is practically without any check or limitation beyond the prepossessions\* and caprice of the critics. It may be, and has been, carried to the most extravagant lengths, and in many cases results in a *reductio ad absurdum*.

The three original documents of the Pentateuch which the critics at the outset assumed, have rapidly developed into eight or fifteen or even eighteen, as Cornill postulates, besides portions of other docu-

ments. Then the sections are broken up into fragments which are jumbled together in the most haphazard fashion. In Dr. Driver's tabulation of the Hexateuch will be found, besides other divisions, fifty fragments consisting of three or four verses; more than forty consisting of a single verse; more than thirty of half a verse, and several cases of a single verse divided into three parts, each assigned to a different author. On one page of the "Polychrome Bible" there are nineteen different little portions pieced together to make one small fragment of history, all of which snippets the critic professes to be able to separate and assign to the different writers who had a hand in the business. The climax of absurdity is reached when the critic assumes to be able to determine that one writer wrote the Hebrew conjunction *waw* ("and") and another wrote the verb with which it is connected.

In spite of the separation between Jehovistic and Elohist documents, Elohim persists in occurring in Jehovistic passages, and Jehovah in Elohist passages. This would seem to a person of ordinary understanding to contradict the theory of distinct Jehovistic and Elohist documents. But the critic is not at all disconcerted. He simply conjures up a Redactor, some Higher Critic, we presume, of ancient days, who has been tampering with the documents. He, it is alleged, for some unexplained reason, made a mistake. He has inserted a verse or a clause, or simply the Divine name, Jehovah or Elohim, as the case may be, without there being anything in the original text that corresponded with it. Or, it is stated, he erased the Divine name that was in the

text and substituted another for it. Or, it is alleged, he has mixed up two texts. Whenever the facts do not square with the theory, then it is always the theory that is right, while the facts are wrong and require correction.

In Genesis 28: 19-29 Kautzsch gives eight alternate changes from E to J back and forth. He severs Genesis 37 into twenty-two fragments, while another critic resolves its thirty-six verses into thirty-two portions. And so this extra-ordinary vivisection goes on in chapter after chapter, until at last Wellhausen, with charming naivete, confesses that "for the most part we have the product of a countless number of narrators unconsciously modifying each other's work." The Redactor himself is vivisected and becomes, Wellhausen tells us, "a collective body including the scribe himself and the whole series of his more or less independent followers." And some of the critics tell us that not a few of the symbols, J, E, JE, D, R, etc., do not represent individual writers whose share in the work can be exactly assigned, but stages in the process in which perhaps many successive hands participated.

Is it conceivable that a complicated production such as this makes the Pentateuch to be, could be analyzed into its constituent documents if such existed?

2. This process of literary analysis is absolutely unprecedented. There is nothing in all literature, ancient or modern, which presents a parallel to the critics' proposed reconstruction of Pentateuch. In every case in which this kind of subjective criticism

has been applied it has absolutely failed when submitted to the test of known facts.

For example, the attempt was made, led on by Wolf, in the case of Homer. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were dissected and Homer himself threatened with extinction. For nearly half a century scarcely a scholar dared to question the new critical patchwork theory of the *Iliad*. But a re-action set in and the substantial unity of the poem has been vindicated. As Leaf says: "We rescue the divine first poet and master of Greece, and we secure an almost unbroken picture of a single age." (*Homer and the Epic.*, p. 221). And again he says: "The most trustworthy literary critics are unanimous in favor of the unity of the *Odyssey* (*Ibid* p. 320).

Similar attacks have been made upon the genuineness and unity of *Orations of Cicero*, *Satires of Juvenal*, and the *Commentaries of Caesar*, and have signally failed. A noteworthy example of the critics' discomfiture occurs in the case of a modern writer—Goethe. A German scholar, Scherer, made an ingenious analysis of the Prologue to *Faust*, pointing out profound diversities of style and inner contradictions, and demonstrating, at least to his own satisfaction, that it was an elaborate compilation made up of diverse fragments of different dates ingeniously woven together. Unfortunately for the critic the subsequent recovery of the oldest manuscript of *Faust* proved that it was Goethe himself who at one effort wrote the Prologue essentially as it now stands.

There is in fact nothing more delusive than such attempts at the dissection of literary works. Any book can be thus resolved into fragments. This

analytical method has been applied, in strict accordance with the procedure of the critics, to works whose unity of authorship was absolutely beyond question, and a case as plausible as any of the results of the Higher Critics, made out in favor of the composite authorship of such books, although this is entirely opposed to the facts as known. This criticism is purely subjective, that is, it has no data outside the mind of the critic. It conjures up a number of documents which have no existence except in the conjectures of the critics, and with amazing fecundity it assumes the existence of scores of great unknown ones—makers of Israel's law, religion and institutions—and even their names have perished and all proof of their existence vanished from the earth. Such a method makes too great demands upon our credulity.

There are in existence a few books of composite authorship, and no one can assign to each author his share. Sir Walter Besant completed the unfinished novel of his friend Rice; and it has been stated by Besant himself that no one has been able to point out correctly what proceeded from each author. W. E. H. Lecky, no mean authority, condemns the exaggerated confidence with which this method of analysis is pursued, plausible conjecture being frequently mistaken for positive proof, and undue significance attached to mere casual coincidences.

What the famous Professor Blackie says of the Higher Critics of Homer applies as truly to the Higher Critics of Moses,—“Much learning has made them, not exactly mad, but super-subtle, curious, captious and impracticable. They have trained themselves to such a habit of magnifying differences that



they have lost all sense of likeness, and think they have explained the process by which a web was woven when they have only discovered a few rents and exposed a few patches." (Homer and the Iliad, vol. I, p. 242).

The learned Italian critic Comparetti, thus caustically describes the analytical methods of those critics,—“This restless business of analysis, which has lasted so long, impatient of its own fruitlessness, yet unconvinced of it, builds up and pulls down and builds up again; while its shifting foundations, its insufficient and falsely applied criteria, condemn it to remain fruitless, tedious and repulsive. The observer marks with amazement the degree of intellectual short-sightedness produced by excessive and exclusive analysis. The investigator becomes a kind of microscope man, who can see atoms but not bodies; motes, and those magnified, but not beams.”

The same tendency to disintegration appears wherever this arbitrary and baseless method of literary analysis is applied. The critics were at first content to bisect Isaiah into an earlier and a later prophet. Now Professor Cheyne reduces the first Isaiah to a small nucleus enveloped in three accretions each of them composite. To the second Isaiah, so-called, of the Exile, he allows five chapters, and divides up the balance among some ten writers.\*

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\*In regard to Isaiah i to xxxix, of whose Isaianic authorship in the main, most critics permitted us still to feel some confidence, we are now told by Cheyne that “it is too bold to maintain that we still have any collection of Isaianic prophecies which in its present form goes back to the period of that prophet.” As to the second Isaiah, so-called, Chap. xl to lxvi, he informs us that it is a collection of fragments, edited and re-edited and not put together till about 250 B.C. *Encyclopædia Biblica*.

A German, Boehme, distributes the little book of Jonah amongst a Jehovist, an Elohist, a Redactor, and a Supplementer, and finds in addition minor insertions and glosses in every chapter. Freaks such as these, which appear often in less extreme writers, show how arbitrary and delusive is the whole process of literary analysis. In fact, it is beginning to be slighted by many of the critics themselves, who confess the uncertainty of the criteria used and are falling back upon their theories of historical and religious development.

#### IV. THE HISTORICAL RELATIONS OF THE NEW THEORY.

Let us now turn to the second of the three lines of enquiry indicated, viz., the relations of the new theory to the history of Israel and the historical credibility of the Pentateuch.

The very assumption that instead of contemporaneous records of the events related, we have only a number of diverse and variant traditions of the Mosaic age as they existed eight or ten centuries after the time of Moses, is destructive of any reasonable certitude as to the reality of the events related.

But this is not all. Even the more moderate of the critics allege that the historical statements of the Old Testament are inaccurate and inconsistent with one another. They tell us that the early history of the Hebrews is very largely mythical; that the Hexateuch is not to be regarded as a history in any strict sense of the term; that it contains stories about Abraham and Moses in which there may be some substratum of truth; and they differ as to the extent

of that substratum, many regarding it as very small indeed, and even then uncertain. They allege that but little is given us of the early history of Israel, but that what is really presented is a picture of the times in which the alleged authors lived, eight or ten centuries after Moses.

It is not a question about trifles, unimportant discrepancies, slight inaccuracies of dates or numbers, all of which are easily explicable. Errors both of words and of facts, false statements and self-contradictions, are freely alleged. Great parts of what the Bible gives as veritable history are pronounced to be "mere fiction," "romance and idealization," "myth and legend." The histories of Joshua and Judges are said to be largely legendary and full of errors. Some admit them to possess shreds of historic truth amidst the mass of myth and fiction.

According to many critics Deuteronomy is a deliberate fraud imposed upon the people by Hilkiah, or some other unknown person, in the time of Josiah. One of the more moderate of recent critics represents the book as "the composition of one who lived in the seventh century, and who sought by a dramatic use of the last words of Moses to recall his countrymen to holier life."\* To the objection that the allusions (in Deut. 7 : 1-5 and 20 : 16-19) to the dwellers in Canaan and to the Amalekites would be unintelligible and unnecessary at so late a period as the seventh century B.C., it is replied that "the writer's purpose is to transfer himself to the age of Moses. If Moses were represented as speaking in the plains of Moab it

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\*Hastings: Dictionary of the Bible. Vol. 1, p. 603.

would be natural for the writer to make him refer to the Canaanites and to introduce suitable local allusions." To put it in plainer terms, the 'unknown author of Deuteronomy having sought to obtain authority for his writing by attributing it to Moses, then endeavored to give an appearance of truth to the fiction by inserting local allusions belonging to the time of Moses. It is, therefore, a deliberate forgery for a pious purpose, set forth with a declaration that it is the Word of the Lord spoken by his servant Moses. The assertion of some critics that the book was written a few years earlier in the troublous reign of Manasseh and deposited for safety in the precincts of the Temple where Hilkiah discovered it, does not at all change the character of the production. How is such a theory to be reconciled with the explicit statement that Moses wrote the book and committed it to the custody of the Levites?

The Prophet Jeremiah must have been himself deceived. For he went through the land re-affirming the words of Deuteronomy as the true record of the Covenant God made with their fathers when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. (Jer. 11. Compare Deut. 27 : 26 ; 4 : 20 ; 7 : 12, 18). Yet this same Jeremiah discriminates between what is truly God's law, and what the false scribes pretended to be God's law ; and denounces the prophets of his day who prophesied in the name of the Lord and the Lord had not sent them. (Jer. 8 : 8 ; 29 : 8, 9, etc.).

The contents of Deuteronomy are altogether inconsistent with the date to which the critics would assign it. What is the meaning of the oft-recurring warning to exterminate the Canaanites, when they had long

ceased to exist, and what is here enjoined had long since been fulfilled? Why should Israel be reminded of what the Amalekites had done to them, and the duty of exterminating them from the face of the earth be strenuously inculcated, when there were no longer any Amalekites? Numerous other statements and references in Deuteronomy could be pointed out, absolutely inconsistent with the late date which the critics give to its origin.

Take but one other illustration of this treatment of the Pentateuch. The Tabernacle, we are told, had no actual existence. The description given of it was simply, the invention of Priestly writers after the Exile, as a symbolic embodiment of their ideas and teachings. But is it credible that the Priests of the Exile and the Return should have set forth the whole worship of Jehovah in closest relations to an imaginary Tabernacle which was never erected, and which there had been no intention or desire to erect; and, on the other hand, that not a word should be said, not a hint given, about the re-erection of the Temple on which the hopes of the Nation were set, and which was with such eagerness and passion urged on by the post-exilic Prophets. The Tabernacle in the wilderness we understand. The Tabernacle at the return from the Exile, even as a work of pious imagination, is an anachronism and an absurdity. The history is resolved into an incredible fiction.

We are not then surprised by the statement of one of the Critics, Professor Curtis of Chicago, that "the conception of Old Testament History has been revolutionized," "Until the period of modern criticism," he says, "the narratives of the Old Testament



had generally been received as records of real history. But according to the new view they contain myths and legends." "If such views prevail," says Dr. Wace, Dean of Canterbury, "while the Old Testament may remain to those who have learning enough to appreciate it, an interesting book of ancient history; it must cease, to the ordinary man, to be a book which he can trust as giving him a faithful record of God's dealings with the Jews."\*

It has been argued by some that if both the authors of the original documents and the editors and redactors were divinely inspired, we have the same certitude as though the whole Pentateuch were the work of Moses. But such a view is in the nature of the case impossible, because the whole theory assumes that the Pentateuch consists of conflicting narratives. The theory implies and asserts the erroneousness of the original documents, which were not merely divergent but contradictory, and the incompetency of the authors and redactors who frequently misunderstood their authorities and sometimes intentionally misrepresented them.† While the critics differ consider-

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\*Bishop Ellicott says, "Modern critical analysis has sought to reduce, that which our Church, day by day, calls the most holy Word of Almighty God, to a strange conglomerate of myth, legend, fabrication, idealized narrative, falsified history, dramatized fable, and after-event prophecy."

† The redactors and revisers seem, according to the opinion of the Higher Critics themselves, to have been a lot of very inaccurate and unreliable men. Thus President Harper, of Chicago, says of one of them:

"His spirit is far from being a critical one; he did not hesitate to use his material in any way which would best subserve his aim. He inserted and omitted, changed and arranged. He did not have insight sufficient to enable him to see that he was all the time committing grave blunders and yet felt no hesitation in altering the originals with which he was working."

ably in their treatment of the historical narratives, some describing them as ancient traditions with a possible nucleus of truth, and others setting forth what may be fairly described as the fictitious, or, as they might prefer to call it, the idealistic explanation of these narratives; in any case what is presented to us is not veritable history, but at the best tradition with a debatable residuum of truth, or ingenious fiction the creation of post-exilic times. The historical truth of the Old Testament is directly challenged, and as Dr. Wace recently said, "We find ourselves brought face to face with the difficult question: whether the Bible is true. That is the practical point at issue. It may be wrapped up in a number of disguises, but it will be found, I believe, that this is what the matter really comes to." The time has come, he continues, when "we must realize that they (the critics) are menacing our belief in the Bible with nothing less than a revolution—a revolution which would have the gravest consequences to the stability of the Christian faith."

Here it should be noted that so far it is not the inspiration of the Pentateuch which is under discussion, but its truthfulness and reliability as an historical record. Is it an authentic and credible history or is it not?

There are two lines of evidence by which the credibility of the Pentateuch can be tested, and, as we believe, established—one is found in the prophetic books of the Old Testament, and the other in the remains and monuments of antiquity.

The first is a line of evidence which every Bible student can trace out for himself. A series of refer-

ences and citations, covering the whole five books and including the principal facts and teachings and even the phraseology, runs through from Joshua, who reminds the people of "the Commandment and the Law which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you"; to Malachi, the last of the prophets, by whose mouth God enjoined upon the people to "remember (ye) the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes and judgments."

Professor Stanley Leathes in his book on "The Law in the Prophets" exhibits 850 references to the Pentateuch taken from seventeen prophetic books. The late Professor Robertson in his admirable lectures on "The Early History of Israel," works out the same argument with special reference to the prophecies of Amos and Hosea, both unquestionably dating from the middle of the eighth century B.C., one belonging to Judah and the other to Israel. These, the oldest of the writing Prophets, show the fullest knowledge of the history and institutions of the Pentateuch, and appeal to a similar knowledge on the part of the people whom they addressed. They bear witness not only to the law, but to the older revelations made to the Patriarchs. Moreover, the references and allusions to these books extend to all the separate portions into which modern critics have divided the Pentateuch.

The second confirmation of the Historical credibility of the Pentateuch is furnished by the recent explorations in Bible lands, by which, as Professor Sayce observes, "a lost world of culture and civilization has been brought to light." Out of the vast accumulation of material it is difficult to make a selection.

The earliest attacks on the Pentateuch were based on the assumption that the Mosaic era was a barbarous age. As late as 1830 it was asserted that it was an impossibility for Moses to have written the Pentateuch, because writing was then unknown, or at least literary culture was too low and elementary for the production of such a work at that period. This has now proved to be, as Sayce tells us, "a baseless assumption due to the ignorance of the critics."

In Ur of the Chaldees there was not only the art of writing but a literature and libraries before the migration of Abraham. In Egypt writing had come down from remote antiquity, and when the Israelites sojourned in that land there was, as Erman says, "a mania for writing." "Nothing," he says, "was done under the Egyptian Government without documents, even in the simplest matters of business." Everywhere were hosts of scribes. Every owner of lands had written reports made to him of his sheep and oxen, cows, asses, geese, etc.; and, as Wilkinson tells us, even the number of eggs was recorded. "We can follow," says Sayce, "the daily life of the Egyptian three thousand years ago more minutely than the daily life of a medieval Englishman, \* \* \* and study the letters of Canaanites who lived before the birth of Moses." And again Sayce tells us: "In the century before the exodus Palestine was a land of books and schools." "The age of Moses was a literary age, the lands which witnessed the exodus and the conquest of Canaan were literary lands, and literature had flourished in them for numberless generations before" (*Lex Mosaica*). Among the famous Tel el-Amarna tablets were found in 1892 two letters written by the

Governor of the city of Lachish to the King of Egypt. In the same year there were found among the ruins of Lachish similar tablets. Thus were brought to light the two parts of a correspondence which took place before the Exodus. We have many other indications of advanced literary culture in Egypt and Canaan at that period as well as in Babylon at a still earlier date.

Surely instead of its being a matter of wonder that the laws and statutes God gave Israel and the early history of the nation were committed to writing, it would have been most unaccountable if this had not been done. The truthfulness of the Pentateuch history is proved in innumerable points relating to the geography, the natural history, the arts, the social and religious customs in Egypt, in the Wilderness and in Canaan. This minute accuracy proves that the narratives must have been the work of eye-witnesses. No writer of later ages could have safely passed through the innumerable liabilities to error to which he was exposed at every step, and reproduced with such exact truthfulness the minutest points of detail in an age and under circumstances so remote from himself as the critics would place the production of the Pentateuch. Sir Walter Besant, for many years Secretary of the Palestine Exploration Fund, in a careful answer to the enquiry whether those researches proved the truthfulness of the Bible narrative, said, "To my mind absolute truth in local details—a thing which can not possibly be invented when it is spread over a history covering many centuries—is proof, almost absolute, as to the truth of the things related." Much similar testimony of the highest character could be adduced. It is absolutely incredible that unknown



writers living from 800 to 1,000 years after the events described, devoid of all access to contemporary authorities and dependent solely upon obscure traditions, could have produced a narrative so absolutely faithful to its environment, and so truthful in its minutest details as the Pentateuch is. It is noteworthy that there does not exist, and no one claims that there exists, any conflict between the narrative of the Pentateuch and any facts known from sources outside of the Pentateuch itself.

## V. THE RELATIONS OF THE RADICAL THEORY TO RELIGION.

The relations of the higher critical theory to religion and religious truth form a third line of enquiry, as already indicated. These relations include three distinct subjects : the origin and nature of the religion of Israel ; the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament ; and the position of our Lord Jesus Christ in regard to the Old Testament.

The radical theory reduces the religion of Israel to the level of a mere natural religion.

As already explained, the speculations of the Higher Critics are largely controlled by a philosophy of evolution, according to which the religion of Israel has been gradually evolved. Beginning, it is alleged, with a crude polytheism, from very feeble beginnings it gradually struggled on to the lofty and spiritual conceptions of the monotheism of the prophets. It is claimed that each part of the Old Testament fits into that natural development, so that the date of a writing can be determined by its correspondence with the moral and spiritual condition of the times. Hence, for ex-

ample, it is alleged that David could not have written Psalms which have been attributed to him, because their spiritual aspirations and experiences transcend the low condition of religion in his days. And in like manner, it is affirmed that the laws and institutions of Moses could not have been put forth by him. Crude beginnings may be traced to him, but the great body of the Pentateuch must belong to much later times, with a more highly developed religious spirit.

This view of the religion of the Old Testament is directly opposed to the representations which the Bible itself gives us. The Old Testament affirms that the Jews received their religion by Divine Revelation, that they stood in a unique relation to God, which no other people ever held, and were throughout their career the recipients of Divine messages, warnings and promises. It also declares and makes plain to us that their religion was always beyond them and opposed to their natural inclinations. At Sinai and through the Desert Wanderings, although witnessing the most remarkable miracles by which God provided for their safety and sustenance, and although under the authority of Moses, the people constantly disobeyed and rebelled. We need not wonder that in Canaan and in contact with its idolatrous and depraved people, they forgot God and plunged again and again into the worst excesses of licentious idolatry. During the reigns of the Kings the history exhibits a scarcely intermittent series of rebellions against God and outbreaks of ungodliness and unrighteousness. All the time the prophets stand in stern opposition to the tendencies and actions of the people. They force upon men God's messages and commands against

which the greater part of the nation is, with the exception of a few brief periods of reform, in a state of chronic rebellion. Nothing could bring out more distinctly that the religion of Israel was not and could not be an evolution from the heart and life of the nation; and nothing can account for the persistence of the religion in the face of the antagonism of the people except that it was divinely given and attested.

Let us turn again to the Higher Critics' description of the origin of the religion of Israel. In brief, it affirms that when certain wandering Hebrew tribes settled in Canaan their religion was of the same kind as the religion of the nations round about them. Israel, says George Adam Smith, looked to their God Jehovah just as Moab looked to Chemosh. He tells us that the religion of Israel remained "before the age of the great prophets (of the eighth century B.C.) not only similar to, but in all respects above-mentioned identical with the general Semitic religion which was not a monotheism but a polytheism, with an opportunity for monotheism at the heart of it." It is asserted that the cultus of the Jews, as of other nations, arose and grew in a natural way. From fetichism they passed gradually through polytheism to monotheism, and their tribal deity Jehovah became elevated into the One True God.

Down to the time of Amos and Hosea the Israelites are said to have worshipped Jehovah with the same belief and the same rites, substantially, as the heathen nations around them worshipped their gods. The prophets first taught Israel the higher truth, but failed to impress their ideals upon the people. It was necessary to convert the ideal into a law and to this

end the Code of Deuteronomy was prepared some short time before the eighteenth year of Josiah. This was attributed to Moses to give it a higher sanction, although it was in reality not written until some six hundred years after his time. Law was thus the outcome of prophecy, not its antecedent; and on this line the development continued until it found its goal in the Levitical code of Ezra and his successors, which in turn became the starting point of Judaism. Such was the natural evolution of the religion of the Old Testament.

But if the same causes were at work among the other Semitic peoples as in Israel, why was this development limited to Israel? Why was it that all these peoples except Israel remained sunk in idolatry and even declined to lower and baser forms of idolatry? How is it that this alleged progress from idolatry to monotheism can be found no where else in the history of mankind? The study of Comparative Religion fails to discover anywhere such an evolution. Jevons, a distinguished student of the subject, says,—“If it is possible to reach monotheism *via* polytheism, it is at least a remarkable fact that of all the peoples of the world no single one is known to have done so.”\*

There are no indications of such an evolution. On the contrary there are many proofs and traces of degeneration. The most eminent anthropologists, such as Renouf, Lang and others, see in fetichism and animism processes of decay. Lang declares that “It is among the lowest savages that the Supreme Beings are most regarded as eternal, moral, (as the morality

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\*Jevons: Introduction to the History of Religion, p. 388.

of the tribes goes or even on a higher level) powerful." (Lang : Making of Religions, page 206). The evidence decidedly points to a primitive monotheism. The tendency is seen everywhere to be away from the purer, primitive faith into idolatry and superstition.

The radical theory fails as to its starting-point. For although it asserts that the pre-prophetic religion was a mere nature-worship, it is compelled to admit the existence of certain peculiarities which distinguish it from the contemporary religions. For example, Jehovah will not tolerate the worship of any other god. He forbids and punishes all other worship. Now, the religions of the other nations did not forbid this. The national god was supreme in his own land, but other gods would be supreme in their lands.

Then again, there was no mythology in Israel, no inferior gods, half-gods or heroes, no ancestor worship, no worship of the heavenly bodies. Jehovah alone is to be worshipped ; He is never regarded as first among equals, or as merely head over secondary gods. But every other Semitic people had its mythology, its gods many and lords many, of all grades, just as ancient Greece had.

So there must have been, even on the showing of the critics themselves, a great deal more in the starting-point than they allow. If there was in Israel's religion from the earliest period, that which distinguished it from all others, it must have received it from the only possible source—the Divine Revelation.

In like manner, the radical theory fails to explain how the prophets lifted up this polytheistic nature-worship to the high level of ethical monotheism, with-



out pre-suppositions which contradict the theory, or without admitting a supernatural intervention which the theory is seeking to keep out.

It was not merely in the assertion of the Divine unity that the religion of Israel from the first differed from that of the surrounding nations.\* It embodied lofty conceptions of the holiness and benevolence of God—conceptions of the Deity entirely absent from every other religion of antiquity. And how opposed it was to these religions in regard to man's acceptance with God, which could not be on the ground of mere ceremonial observance, but by faith only, trust in God and obedience to His holy will. From the first to the last of the Old Testament there is this great truth opposed to the teaching of all other religions, opposed to the natural instincts and predilections of fallen man everywhere, that man is accepted and

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\*Prof. Robert Dick Wilson, in a careful enquiry into the leading ideas of Babylon and Israel as exhibited in their vocabularies, draws attention to the long line of opposition between the religion and policy of the Hebrews and of the Babylonians from the time of Abraham to the later Jewish literature in which Babylon stands forth as the very head and front of offence against the kingdom of the God of Israel.

"All through that extended and extensive literature of the ancient Hebrews, all through those long annals of the Assyrians and Babylonians, wherever the Hebrews and the Assyrio-Babylonians were brought into contact, it was by way of opposition. The only exceptions were in the cases of some weakling, Jehovah-distrusting kings. But with these exceptions, prophets and kings and poets emphasize and reiterate the antagonism, essential and eternal, existing between the worship of Jehovah and the worship of the idols of Babylon." *Princeton Theological Review*—April, 1903

The recently discovered Code of the great Babylonian legislator Khammurabi has been the subject of eager discussion. Not a few monographs have been published tracing points of similarity and dependence between his laws and those of the Pentateuch. But the distinguished orientalist Sayce has come to the opposite conclusion. He says: "I find little except difference and contrast: what has struck me has been, not the agreement, but the unlikeness between the Codes of Babylon and Moses."—*Expository Times*—Nov. 1903.

forgiven not on the ground of his own performances and sacrifices, but only on the ground of the Divine mercy. It is faith that is reckoned for righteousness.

It can be shown that at every point the theory breaks down. At each step it involves itself in self contradictions.

The position of Moses is a great difficulty with the critics. His existence is too well attested, by Egyptian and classical as well as Jewish tradition, to be denied, although it is alleged that much of what the Pentateuch relates about him is mythical and legendary. The greatness of his influence is admitted by the very argument of the critics that writings of late date were attributed to him in order to secure for them acceptance and authority.

Vatke, from whom Wellhausen says that he has learned best and most, affirms that Moses must be measured by his time, and that it is impossible for an individual to rise suddenly from a lower to a higher stage and raise a whole people with him. He further argues that if the Jews had been so lifted up by Moses, it was impossible for them to fall back again to the low level of idolatry. Now, the Biblical history meets both difficulties. It shows us that it was by divine inspiration that Moses attained his high level, and that it was through unbelief and sensuality that Israel failed to assimilate the truth he taught, and relapsed from time to time into idolatry and unrighteousness.

But apart from this supreme consideration, history itself confutes the assumption of the critics. There have arisen from time to time epoch-making men, great originators, who have given a new bent and

uplifting to the course of history. Such a man was our great King Alfred, whose character and achievements were not long ago conspicuously brought before us in the celebration of the thousandth anniversary of his death. Read what the historian Green says of "the moral grandeur of his life," and of the extent and magnificence of his achievements; how he "created a fleet," how he "began the conception of a national law," and how "he created English literature." He was a great educator and a great legislator. He was a reformer far in advance of his times. What he initiated has only been gradually, and after the lapse of centuries, in the face of many reversions and retrogressions built up into the solid fabric of British institutions.

Then turn to the extraordinary work of Charlemagne, who gave to the German race its first political organization, who brought law and order into every province of his Empire, who fostered trade and industry, who founded schools, the germs of our Universities, who cultivated art and music and poetry, and who gave earnest devotion to the interests of religion and the Church. Such facts show the untenableness of the radical theory, even from the merely human standpoint.

The evolutionary theory is buttressed in the critics' argument by two assumptions of which much has been made: one, that the non-observance of law proves its non-existence; the other that violation of law could not exist where the law is promulgated.

Most fallaciously has the argument from silence been used, as though that which is not named in the records did not exist; whereas in most cases it is true,

that what is a commonplace of existence, what stands unquestioned and known to all, is taken for granted and passed over in silence. For example, Eusebius in his history passes over in silence the books of the New Testament Canon universally received, and dwells only upon the testimony to those books that were doubted by some. The Kuran makes no allusion to circumcision, although it is held by the Mohammedans to be an ancient divine institution older than Mohammed. Nor is circumcision mentioned in the Minor Prophets, the Psalms, Kings, Chronicles, or the post Exilic writings. That the silence of history often occurs in connection with the best known facts can be abundantly illustrated.

Even if in the case of the laws of Moses an actual disregard can be proved in the times of the Judges or the Kings, that does not prove their non-existence. Violation of law may proceed not only from the vice of individuals, but from the indifference of communities, as in the case of much temperance legislation in Canada and elsewhere. There are sections of English literature, such as the Drama of the Restoration, from which it might be inferred that at such periods there was no law, no Church, no Bible, no God in England.

Sir J. Stephen in his "Lectures on the History of France" gives a remarkable instance of the total oblivion of a famous code of laws. He says,—“When the barbarism of the domestic government (under the Carlovingian dynasty) had thus succeeded the barbarism of the government of the state, one of the most remarkable results of that political change was the disappearance of the laws and institutions by

which Charlemagne had endeavored to elevate and civilize his subjects. Before the close of the century in which he died, the whole body of his laws had fallen into utter disuse throughout the whole extent of his Gallic dominions. They who have studied the charters, laws and chronicles of the later Carolingian Princes most diligently are unanimous in declaring that they indicate either an absolute ignorance or an entire forgetfulness of the legislation of Charlemagne." Now, as has been pertinently asked : "Will the critics apply the same rule to Charlemagne that they do to Moses, and infer that he never gave the laws attributed to him ?"

The arguments of the critics prove too much. Take, for example, the code of laws known as the Books of the Covenant (Exod. xx to xxiii and Exod. xxxv: 10, 14-26) which are incorporated in J. E. History shows that there was a general violation of these laws long after the Exile. Sins definitely forbidden in them were tolerated by the rulers and practised by the people after 623 as much as before, and even as late as 444 B.C. Other illustrations might be adduced if our space permitted.

Möller, after a careful discussion of the subject, affirms that if the non-mention of a law be a proof of its non-existence, then "The Books of the Covenant" are impossible before the Exile; and if the general violation of a law be taken as a proof of its non-existence, then both "The Books of the Covenant" and the Book of Deuteronomy are impossible before the Exile. In fact, as he observes, the critical methods "if consistently carried out, would prove not only that the Biblical representation of Israelitish



history is untenable, but the modern construction of the history (by the Higher Critics) is quite as much so.”\*

According to the principles of procedure of the critics themselves, it is impossible to reconcile with the history the position they assign to the laws. There is no such correspondence of the laws with the history as the evolutionary theory assumes. The religious conceptions of the different laws never at any time corresponded in their origin to the conditions and character of the people. On the contrary, they were always opposed to the inclinations and condition of the people and are plainly due to the God-given authority and inspiration of Moses and the Prophets who sought to uplift the people to a higher level. The Old Testament everywhere proclaims itself to be a Divine Revelation.

There is certainly progress in the Revelation. All the essential elements were in actual existence in the time of Moses. What the subsequent history discloses is the enlargement and deepening of the Revelation by means of the Prophets, and an advance in the understanding of the Revelation and in the appropriation of its truth. God was not content to reveal Himself merely under the limitations of nature and in the ordinary workings of the laws of nature, but in actual super-natural visitations and manifestations which transcended nature and revealed Him as the Living God in personal relations to His people.

Moreover, if a merely natural evolution be established in the case of the Old Testament, how can it

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\*Moeller: "Are the critics right?" Page 204. This is an excellent book for thoughtful readers, written by one who was himself formerly a "Higher Critic."

end there? Must we not in all consistency be compelled to regard the revelation in Christ as also a natural development? If super-natural intervention is banished from the Old Testament, by what right can it be introduced into the New Testament? If in the Old Dispensation the divine working was confined within the limits of the natural, as those critics who admit any divine action affirm, must not the same limits be placed upon the divine working in the New Dispensation? Are we to understand that the revelation in Christ is only a natural development? The course and tendency of the Higher Critical movement plainly shows that it must come to this, and the more thorough-going critics do not hesitate to affirm that this is their position.

## VI. THE HIGHER CRITICISM AND THE INSPIRATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The radical theory impugns the divine Inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures and deprives them of their authority as the Divine rule of faith.

The Scriptures claim to be divinely inspired. "All Scripture," declares St. Paul, "is given by inspiration of God." (2 Tim. III: 16.) The Revised Version does not change the force of the statement. "Every Scripture given by inspiration of God," that is, inasmuch as it is given by inspiration of God, "is profitable." The whole of Scripture is inspired. This inspiration was a special divine influence which controlled and guided the sacred writers in such a way that what they wrote is not man's word merely, but God's word. Even so liberal a theologian as the late Dr. Robertson Smith supports this position: "People

now say that the Bible only contains the Word of God, when they mean that part of the Bible is the Word of God and another part is the word of man. That is not the doctrine of our Churches, which hold that the substance of all Scripture is God's word."

The Bible is a divine-human book throughout, not partly divine and partly human, but both divine and human throughout its whole compass.

The Bible is a human book. God in it speaks to men by the ministry of men, whose personality is not destroyed but strengthened and illuminated. The distinctive characteristics of each writer are impressed upon his portion of the sacred volume; and the spiritual experience and gifts of each are utilized. Hence the variety and manifoldness of the Scriptures, their differences in style and method, and their adaptation to the various wants and moods of men.

The Bible is a Divine book, the work of the Spirit who controlled its production throughout, communicating truth not discernible by men, illuminating the understanding of the writers, imparting a right judgment, restraining from error, securing accuracy in testimony and discrimination in the use of pre-existing material, and suggesting apt and fit words for the correct setting forth of the revealed truth.

As Bishop Westcott says, in the Scriptures there is perfect union between the Divine and human: "It preserves absolute truthfulness with perfect humanity. The letter becomes as perfect as the spirit; and it may very well seem that the image of the Incarnation is reflected in the Christian Scriptures, which, as I believe, exhibit the human and the Divine in the highest form and in the most perfect union."

Holy Scripture, inasmuch as it is inspired of God, "is profitable," as St. Paul affirms, "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Though all Scripture is not of equal value, all is valuable; every part of the wonderful organism has its place and its use. As Origen long ago said: "Every word of it (Scripture), if only it be rightly viewed, effects a special purpose; for revelation is not a vain thing for us; it is our life." Such was the view of the Reformers, as is graphically set forth by Professor Lindsay: "The simplest Bible stories and even geographical and architectural descriptions may, and do, give us the side-lights necessary to complete the manifestation of God to His people. \* \* \* No detail of individual or national life is useless. Everything helps to fill in the picture of fellowship between God and His people, which can come true in our experience if we have the same faith which these holy men of God had. The value of the whole Bible lies in the fact that directly or indirectly every part serves to convey to us an infallible declaration of the sovereign will of God."

What Bishop Westcott says of the Gospels is true of every portion of the Scriptures: "It would be easy to prove that there is no singularity in expression or detail in trait of individual feeling or conception in the Gospels which does not in some one place greatly affect our notion of Christ's teaching."

Just as every atom and organism in the Universe has its place and its use and its value, however diversified; so also in the wonderful living unity of the Divine Word, every book and incident and portion and word has its significance and its value; and the

humblest, the most trivial, the least perfect, is as true as the greatest, and as fully inspired by the One Spirit of Revelation and of Truth.

Now such a book from its very nature possesses two pre-eminent characteristics ; as to its origin, it is super-natural ; as to its contents, it is the truth. But the radical theory deprives the Old Testament of both of these qualities.

The Old Testament, like the New, is a super-natural book, super-naturally inspired. Inspiration is not, as some would say, simply an exalted form of human genius, nor is it merely a stronger faith and a deeper spiritual insight, differing only in degree from what is possessed by all Christians. This would make the Scriptures merely literary productions, perhaps the purest and most exalted in their ethical and religious contents, but still differing, only in degree, not in nature, from kindred productions of human genius and expressions of human thought and feeling.

The Higher Critics by their philosophical theory endeavor to eliminate the super-natural element from the Scriptures. They either openly deny its super-natural character, or place it under such limitations that it is virtually destroyed. Some disavow any special Divine inspiration of the Old Testament, and place the religious books of Israel in the same category as the religious books of other nations, affirming that they are no more inspired than these. And certainly if the religion of Israel be the product of a natural evolution, all such super-natural intervention as inspiration implies is absolutely excluded. Even those who profess to hold to a doctrine of inspiration so modify it as to deprive it of its distinctive character



and reduce it virtually to an ordinary operation of the Divine Spirit, such as that to which all gifts of human genius and attainments of religious faith are to be traced. Thus George Adam Smith denies that prediction forms any part of prophecy. Speaking of the Prophets he says: "By a faith differing in degree but not in kind from ours these men became Prophets of God." Isaiah, he tells us, "prophesied and predicted all he did from loyalty to two simple truths, which he tells us he received from God Himself; that sin must be punished and that the people of God must be saved. This simple faith acting along with a wonderful knowledge of human nature and ceaseless vigilance of human affairs constituted inspiration for Isaiah." Such utterances—and many might be quoted from the writings of the Critics—illustrate the irresistible tendency in the modern theory of the Old Testament to break down the super-natural character of the inspiration of the Scriptures.

The second characteristic quality of the Scriptures, which I have named, is their truthfulness. The very object of inspiration is to secure a true and reliable record. If the Scriptures are inspired by the Spirit of Truth they must possess in a supreme degree the attribute of truthfulness. If there is not perfect truthfulness there can be no true Divine inspiration. There is no possible middle ground; as Bishop Westcott well says: "Much of the criticism of the present day seems to assume that there is some resting place between the perfect truthfulness of inspiration and the uncertainty of ordinary writing. \* \* \* A subjective standard is erected, which if once admitted, will be used as much to measure the doctrines as the

facts of Scripture ; and while many speculators boldly avow this, others are contented to admit the premises from which the conclusion necessarily follows." If we accept the premises of the modern theory of the Old Testament we will be forced to the logical issue, to the denial of the Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures.

Dr. Robertson Smith has stated that "the proof that a book is credible must precede belief that it is inspired." How much credibility, we may well ask, remains to a literature largely composed, as the Higher Critics assert, of myth, legend and forgery? Can the loosest and most elastic theory of inspiration admit such a volume within its compass?

But it is urged that God can reveal Himself through myth and legend, just as our Lord employed parables for the conveyance of Divine truth. True, but our Lord never gave us parables for history. What is presented to us in the Old Testament is given as veritable history, not as myth and legend. When allegories are made use of they are not presented to us as history. And what is given as history, a truthful record of God's dealings with His people, can not be turned into myth and legend and fabrication, as the critics allege, without impugning the veracity and trustworthiness of the Old Testament, and in consequence, its inspiration ; "unless," as Canon Liddon said, "there is such a thing as the inspiration of inveracity." Such an inspiration cannot proceed from Him Whose "Word is Truth."

Two cautions may be seasonable here. Inspiration does not exempt the Bible from errors of transmission. As a matter of fact, we know that the Scriptures, as we possess them, transmitted through ages even by

means of imperfect manuscripts and defective translations, are unavoidably subject to the mistakes and blemishes of all such translation and transmission. The wonder is that they are so few. A special Providence has wonderfully watched over the transmission of the sacred volume. The errors and defects which have been found are wholly superficial and transient. They do not detract one iota from the completeness of the revelation, or cast the slightest doubt upon a single great truth or fact recorded therein.

Inspiration did not impart the knowledge of human science. The Scriptures were not given to teach science or history or any other subject of knowledge attainable in ordinary ways. Their object is distinctly spiritual and religious, and all other subjects are subordinate to the main topic and purpose. Nevertheless the general harmony between the Bible and science is remarkable in two ways. Conspicuously unique is the freedom of the Scriptures from the errors, puerilities and superstitions which abound in the sacred books of other religions. The Divine Inspiration has exercised a wonderful restraining influence, which preserved the sacred writers from the absurdities into which their contemporaries fell. The Bible contradicts no known fact of science.

But there is much more than this negative freedom from error in the Biblical allusions to nature ; there is a remarkable correspondence between the order of the physical universe as related in the Scriptures and as unfolded by science, a correspondence which has been expounded by Dawson, Guyot, Dana and others, who were at once eminent students of nature and humble disciples of Christ. The Bible does not indeed teach

empirical science ; but it does unfold the fundamental principles upon which the Universe is constructed, which give unity and coherence to nature, and which lie at the roots of every scientific problem and investigation.

Two misconceptions are frequently met with. The one is the confusion of imperfection with error ; the other is the confusion of difficulties with proved errors. As to the first, there is a radical distinction between what is merely imperfect and what is untrue. Error is contrary to truth. Imperfection is true as far as it goes, but it is not truth in its fullness and completeness. Truth in its rudimentary form is imperfect, but it is not erroneous. Truth in germ develops truth. Error in germ develops error. There is a progress in the Bible from the more elementary and imperfect revelations to the mature revelations of the New Testament. Every instructed Christian knows how great an advance the New marks upon the Old Testament. But the imperfection and incompleteness of the Old is not erroneousness, as many Old Testament critics seem to think.

Then there is the second prevalent misconception, which confuses difficulties and discrepancies with proved errors. No one questions the existence of difficulties in the Scriptures. A Bible without difficulties would be itself the greatest difficulty of all ; it would furnish the most available weapon to the sceptic and impose the greatest strain upon our faith. Just as in life, just as in the material universe, so in the Holy Scriptures there are difficulties, and these, in patient submission to them and in mastery

of them, furnish a Divinely-appointed discipline most necessary for Christian growth and character.

But there is a vital distinction, too often overlooked, between difficulties and proved errors. There never has been, there never can be, I say it with absolute confidence,—found in the Scriptures, a demonstrated error. Here let me cite the testimony of the late Dean Farrar, all the more valuable because he repudiates the view of Scripture that would exclude “the possibility of mistake” by the Bible writers; yet even he is constrained to say,—“That they did so err I am not so irreverent as to assert, nor has the widest learning and acutest ingenuity of scepticism ever pointed to one complete and demonstrated error of fact or doctrine in the Old or New Testament.” We deny the existence of proved errors, we admit the existence of difficulties. The failure to distinguish between these constitutes what Dr. Warfield pertinently describes as “the ineradicable inability of the whole negative school.”

Not a few of the difficulties now paraded before us are in reality the result of the critical theory to which it is sought to make the histories of the Old Testament conform. Some difficulties are due, as already noted, to the defects in the transmission of books so ancient, and preserved in the face of the most destructive forces arrayed against them. Many difficulties are plainly due to the incompleteness of the narrative or the insufficiency of our knowledge. Not a few difficulties, which have been in the past held up by sceptics as positive errors, have been completely removed. There is abundance of evidence to

justify our confidence that remaining difficulties will in due time receive a satisfactory solution.

## VII. THE HIGHER CRITICISM AND CHRIST.

The third factor in the religious relations of the Higher Criticism I desire to approach with utmost reverence : but I cannot see how it is possible to avoid the conclusion that the Radical Theory comes into conflict with the character and claims of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The light in which the Jews contemporary with our Lord and His disciples regarded the Old Testament, is well known. They held explicitly the Divine origin of every word of the Old Testament: and it is conceded by scholars that our Lord and His disciples held the same view. Thus Rothe says,—“We find in the New Testament authors the same theoretical view of the Old Testament and the same practice as to its use, as among Jews of the time in general.” Again he says,—“Our authors, (that is of the New Testament) look upon the words of the Old Testament as immediate words of God and adduce them expressly as such, even those of them which are not at all related as direct sayings of God. They see nothing at all in the sacred volume, which is simply the word of its human author and not, at the same time, the very word of God Himself. In all that stands written God Himself speaks to them and so entirely are they habituated to think only of this that they receive the sacred word written itself, as such, as God's word.” The New Testament throughout unmistakably presents this view, to use the words of Pfleiderer, of “the irrefragable



authority of the letter (of the Old Testament) as the immediately revealed word of God." A recent writer admits that,—“Now there can be practically no doubt that Christ believed in the historicity of all incidents to which he alluded, as well as in the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.”\* Again he says,—“It is admitted that in all probability Jesus believed that Moses wrote the Pentateuch.”† If our Lord thus stamped the Old Testament with His authority and affirmed, as He undoubtedly did, the historical reliability and genuineness of the Pentateuch, as the work of Moses, should not this at once settle the question so far as these are concerned? As the late Canon Liddon forcibly puts it,—“A sincere and intelligent belief in the Divinity of Jesus Christ obliges us to believe that Jesus Christ as a Teacher, is infallible . . . . The man who sincerely believes that Jesus Christ is God will not doubt that His every word standeth sure and that whatever has been sealed by His supreme authority is independent of and unassailable by the judgment of His creatures respecting it.” And above all on the Old Testament our Lord has set the sanction and seal of his supreme authority.

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\*McFadyen: Old Testament Criticism, p. 209.

†Professor George Adam Smith says that, “opinions of the abiding validity of the Old Testament were held by the apostles along with a very strict belief in the inspiration of its text.” Now there can be no doubt that whatever views were held by the inspired writers of the New Testament as to the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament, they were the views which had been taught by Christ. As Bishop Moule says, “The glorified Christ sent down the Paraclete, and the first and abiding work of the Paraclete was to illuminate the apostles with a new understanding of the truth and glory of the Old Testament Scriptures, altogether in the lines of their crucified Masters teaching about them.” — Moule: To my Younger Brethren, p. 58.

We do not mean to maintain that all critical inquiry is shut off, and that there are not many questions as to the composition of the Books of Scripture which are legitimate subjects for critical investigation. But these are minor points and do not affect the great issues. Our Lord affirmed, and on His authority we believe, that the Pentateuch relates the true history of the covenant people of God, that it is not a collection of myths, and legends, but veritable and trustworthy history, that it contains real and actual revelations given by Divine inspiration, and that Moses is the author of the Books substantially as they stand. The Higher Critics admit that our Lord held both the historicity and the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, indeed of the Old Testament in general. How then is our Lord's attitude towards the Old Testament attempted to be explained from the standpoint of the critics?

Some maintain that our Lord did not actually hold these views in regard to the Old Testament, but spoke as He did by way of accommodation to Jewish prejudices. This explanation assumes that Christ, although He knew that the beliefs of those about Him in regard to the Divine authority of the Old Testament were false, yet stated and reaffirmed them, as if they were true. This involves a charge of wilful misrepresentation against our Lord: for He did not merely pass over these matters in silence but made positive affirmations. The attempt to distinguish between things which Christ definitely taught and those which lay within what has been called the "neutral zone" signally fails. If such a "neutral zone" exists, which is more than questionable,

certainly our Lord's teaching as to the Old Testament has no place within it.

To believe that Moses wrote the Pentateuch is not a matter of salvation, but to believe that Christ is true, that in what He believed and affirmed He cannot be mistaken, is a most vital matter. The plea that Christ did not teach critical science, that such questions had not been raised in His day, is beside the mark. What is in question is not Christ's knowledge of critical science, but the trustworthiness of His utterances about the Old Testament, whether it is or is not a true account of God's dealings with His people and an authoritative record of His revelations to them. Certainly, our Lord assumed and affirmed the historical trustworthiness and the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. He did not pass over these points in silence: His affirmations are distinct and positive. He claimed absolute authority for His own words; and conspicuous among His words are His teachings as to the Old Testament.

If what He said in regard to it was merely a politic compliance with what others mistakenly believed, and not the truth as He Himself knew it, does not such a representation of Christ cast a very serious imputation upon His character? Does not it seriously invalidate all His teachings, and asperse His claims, to be not merely truthful, but the very Truth itself?

The most of those who attempt to reconcile the conclusions of the radical criticism with the claims and teachings of our Lord give a different explanation. They affirm that He spoke of the Old Testament as he knew and believed, but that He shared in the ignorance of His contemporaries, and,

be it observed, of all the inspired writers of the New Testament, in regard to the real origin and character of the Old Testament Scriptures. In this, they affirm He simply displayed that ignorance and fallibility which formed part of His Humiliation when He took upon Him our nature with all its infirmities. The former explanation touched our Lord's character; this explanation challenges His competency. In it two great questions are involved: the first, as to the nature and extent of our Lord's knowledge; the second, as to His relations to the Old Testament.

1. First, then, let us consider the question as to our Lord's knowledge,—what was its nature and extent?

He is the God-man, Son of God and Son of Man. Our Lord, in taking upon Him "the form of a servant," did not lay aside "the form of God." (Phil. ii: 6-8). It was "while existing and continuing to exist in the essential form of God" that He took upon Him "the form of a servant." It was the Divine Person, the eternal Son of God, who took into union with His divine nature our human nature, and all through His career of service and of suffering, He was still subsisting in the form of God. He, the Incarnate One, did not cease to be God. He did not divest Himself of a single divine attribute. The two natures, the divine and the human, in their fullness and perfection, subsisted together in the One Person. He possessed the qualities and experienced the conditions that belong to both. He, therefore, possessed both divine and human knowledge, real and complete. Whatever mystery there may be in the co-existence of the two, it is part of the profound mystery of the Incarnation.

Jesus is God. It is this that gave efficacy to His redeeming work. It is this that constituted Him the Revealer of God. For, as He said, "No one knoweth the Father except the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." As God, Jesus knew all things. He could not, and did not part with His Divine Omniscience, even while He increased in human wisdom.

As man, in all things made like unto us, Jesus was possessed of human knowledge, under all its essential conditions and limitations. This is shown in that He is declared to have increased in wisdom. Moreover, Jesus possessed an empirical knowledge, a knowledge acquired by experience. There were many things which "He came to know." His human understanding was subject to the same laws of growth and progress, and was under the same conditions of observation and reflection, as that of other men.

But on the other hand, Jesus was a man unlike all other men. He was a perfect man, and He was without sin. He was, therefore, free from all the prejudices, the perversions of thought and will, the self-seeking and error, which affect our knowledge,

He was possessed by the Holy Spirit. His pure humanity was moulded by the Spirit out of Virgin flesh. In Him dwelt the fullness of the Spirit, who led and controlled Him throughout His life on earth. And in His death it was by the Eternal Spirit that He offered up Himself to God. His mind was elevated, enlarged, illuminated by the Spirit to the utmost extent that the most capacious human mind was capable of. There are no limits to be set to Christ's human knowledge, short of the ultimate

limits of His human nature to receive and bear the Divine illumination.

But there is still more. The human nature of Jesus was in closest union with God. His human knowledge was being continually replenished from the Divine knowledge. He represents Himself as being in constant and closest fellowship with God ; and draws a remarkable contrast between what He thus saw and knew and what man, as man, can see and know. "No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son (or, as a strongly attested reading gives,—“the only-begotten God”) Which is (not “was”) in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” “The Son,” he declares, “can do nothing Himself, but what He *seeth* the Father doing, for the Father *showeth* Him all things that Himself doeth.” He has continuous fellowship with the Father ; He maintains an unbroken vision of the Father, an unbroken continuity of communion with Him ; so that His words were the words of the Father and His works were the works of the Father. While on earth He could say in the full consciousness of His Divine nature and existence,—“Before Abraham was, I AM.”\*

Compare Jesus as the Revealer of God with the prophets. They brought messages from God. Jesus revealed God Himself. He claimed to know the will of God, the truth of God, yea, God Himself, in terms which in the mouth of the greatest of the Prophets would have been arrogant and blasphemous. Our Lord asserted His knowledge of the Father to be equal to the Father’s knowledge of Him. Our Lord’s

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\* John 1 : 18 ; 3 : 34 ; 5 : 19, 23 ; 8 : 58.



revelations of the Father were not the expression of His remembrance of a former fellowship which He had with the Father. They flowed immediately out of His actual fellowship with the Father during His life on earth. They were drawn directly and continuously from the Father, as no prophet's announcements and disclosures could be. "He Whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God." (John iii : 34.)

The source from which our Lord drew His Revelations was the Divine Mind. He had, as man, continual access to the Divine Omniscience. From that boundless source He, as man, appropriated all that His human mind and consciousness were capable of; and thus the Divine revelations were translated into the forms of human intelligence, and made accessible to us. Jesus was capable of such knowledge, because He was God; no mere man was capable of it. Yet He received no more than such a mind could appropriate. He is truly man, as well as really God.

It is because Christ is Man that His utterances are accessible to us. It is because He is true God that they possess absolute and infallible authority. Nothing was excluded from His human knowledge which was necessary for our salvation. What was or was not imparted to His human mind was determined by the requirements of that mission of service and mercy for which He was pleased to be made man. (Compare Hooker, E.P.V. 54, 6).

Hence our Lord's knowledge included all God's will and working in and for man's salvation, all that He had done in the past throughout the history of

redemption, all that He was then doing through the Incarnate One Who knew every detail and feature of His own work and sufferings and death, and all that He was about to do in the future developments of His Kingdom. In our Lord's disclosures as to the future glory of that kingdom and His own Second Coming, there is one remarkable reservation. He not only refuses to give any answer to the enquiries as to the time of His Second Advent, but He expressly declares that the Son of Man Himself is in ignorance of it. (Mark xiii: 32). It is not difficult to see why this limitation was here placed upon his human knowledge. The time of the Second Advent was in the Divine Wisdom excluded from the Revelations made by Jesus. "It is not," He declares, "for you to know times and seasons which the Father hath set in His own authority." (Act i: 7).

Yet from this solitary and exceptional case, some have endeavored to deduce a general principle and to apply it, as we have seen, to our Lord's knowledge of the Old Testament.

2. What then were our Lord's relations to the Old Testament? He certainly never asserted ignorance in regard to it, as He did in regard to His second coming.

Moreover, the two subjects are entirely different in their nature and in their bearing upon the Christian life. The whole moral and disciplinary value of the truth of the Second Advent depends upon this, that while its occurrence is certain, the time of the coming is uncertain. On this ground, we are exhorted to be "always ready because we know not when the Son of Man cometh."

On the contrary, the truthfulness and authority of the Old Testament are fundamental to Christian faith and life. Most remarkable are our Lord's relations to it. Not only was He a profound student of it, fully conversant with its contents and deeply versed in its teachings; not only did He honor its authority and assert its inviolability, rebuking additions to it, correcting misinterpretations, discriminating what was temporary, and assuring men of its stability and perpetuity; not only did He teach and train His disciples from it, not merely instructing them, as another teacher might have done, but giving them spiritual illumination and opening their mind to understand it; but beyond even these evidences of His intimate connection with the sacred volume there are two outstanding constituents in His relations to the Book of the Old Covenant. He declared Himself to be the Supreme Subject of the Old Testament. He found and expounded "in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." "They were all," He says, "written concerning Me." (Luke xxiv : 27, 44). "They are they," He affirms, "which testify of me." (John v : 39). He declares Himself to be the Object of all the promises and predictions of the Old Testament, the fulfilment and consummation of all its revelations.

Then again He was not only the Subject, but the Author of the Old Testament. God has given no revelation of Himself except through the Eternal Son. God reveals His power and wisdom in His works; and that revelation was given through the Son, for "all things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that hath been made." (John i : 3).

God spake by the Prophets; but it was "the Spirit of Christ which was in them." (1 Pet. i : 11).

Our Lord declares that "He is the Light of the World," and that as well before as after the Incarnation. As He said, "Whosoever I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." (John ix : 5). The declaration points back, as Bishop Westcott notes, to the manifold revelations of the Old Testament through the Patriarchs, in the Law and in the Prophets. He was the Light that illumined every prophet and teacher of the Old Dispensation. He was the Mediator through whom the Old Testament, as well as the New, was given. There never was, there never could be, any revelation of the Father, except through the Son. The office of Revealer belongs to Him as Son. It is inherent in His Person.

Now, if the Lord's relations to the Old Testament be so vital, so fundamental, so bound up both with its origin and its subject; and if, as even the critics admit, He believed in and affirmed its historic truth and its Divine authority, is it possible to believe that He was mistaken, that He spoke in ignorance of its real origin and character? Are we not "bound," as Bishop Stubbs has said, "to accept the language of our Lord in reference to the Old Testament Scriptures as beyond appeal?"\* And, if we refuse thus to accept it, what credence can be given to our Lord's words on any other subject? If our Lord were so ignorant in regard to the former revelations of God in the Old Testament, what guarantee have we that His claims to be the Revealer of the Father in the New Testament are not vitiated by the same ignorance?

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\*Bishop of Oxford's Second Charge, 1893.

## CONCLUSION.

In conclusion two considerations should be emphasized.

I. All the phenomena of the Pentateuch are explainable upon the supposition of its Mosaic authorship.

Let us take, for example, the Book of Genesis. It closes at a time three hundred years or more prior to the life of Moses. Theologians have long held that Moses in writing it had before him written sources from which he may have drawn material. In this view there is nothing opposed to its character and claims as a portion of the inspired word of God. In the books of Kings and Chronicles there are references to older records from which parts of their contents were taken. St. Luke, we know, made use of written documents in writing his Gospel. So we may be reasonably sure that under the same divine inspiration, Moses made use of written material handed down from bye-gone ages, rejecting what was false and superstitious and giving us an authentic record of God's dealings with the human race and with the fathers of the chosen nation.

This view receives remarkable confirmation from the ancient Babylonian records recently disintombed. There is a wonderful similarity between the story of creation given in these and that in Genesis, but with striking differences. In the Babylonian records, as Sayce observes, "there is no longer a creator God . . . . He has been swept aside and an atheistical philosophy has taken his place." "The words with which the Book of Genesis begin are a curious contradiction of the statement of the

Babylonian Cosmologist. But the contradiction illustrates the difference between the Hebrew and Babylonian points of view. The Hebrew was not only a monotheist; he believed also that everything, even from the beginning, had been made by the Supreme God; the Babylonian on the contrary started with a materialistic philosophy." Again he says,—“The Hebrew Cosmology starts from the belief in the one God, besides whom there is none else. On its forefront stand the words,—‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.’” “Herein, says Sayce, “lies the great contrast between the Babylonian and the Hebrew conceptions of creation.’ ”\*

A comparison of the Babylonian and Genesis accounts of the flood yields similar results. As Sayce says, “the connection between the Babylonian and Hebrew stories is very close, and the Babylonian is the older of the two.” And, Sayce notes another remarkable fact brought to light by the comparison, namely, that the resemblances between the two, “are not confined to one only of the two documents into which modern criticism has separated the Bible narrative. The agreement exists with both together, the Jehovistic and the Elohist, as they are found at present combined, or (rather) supposed to be combined in the Hebrew text.” The fact he observes, “throws grave doubt on the reality of the critical analysis” of the Old Testament.†

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\*Sayce: The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia, p. 383, 395.

†Ibid, p. 443, 444



The story could not have been borrowed by the Jews in the age of the Exile ; the Palestinian coloring of the Bible version forbids such a supposition. Besides, the discovery of the Tel el-Amarna tablets shows that the culture and literature of Babylon had made their way into Palestine and even into Egypt long before the Mosaic age, and that the great literary works of Chaldæa were even at that time known and used as text-books in Palestine and Egypt, and some of them had found their way even into Greece.

Then, again, it is highly probable that the Pentateuch underwent some process of revision or modernization. How necessary this would be appears from a reference to the history of our own English Bible.

In the East, with its marvelous immobility, lingual changes might have been less rapid and extensive, but during the centuries from the Exodus to the time of Ezra the scribe, great changes must have taken place. Ezra was a man of great zeal and learning, and he is represented as publicly reading and interpreting the Law to the people. Bishop Westcott maintains that the tradition which points to Ezra and the Great Synagogue as "having revised and closed the collection of sacred books is supported by strong internal probability." Lord Arthur Hervey holds that the statements of the sacred narrative "give the utmost probability to the account which attributes to him a corrected edition of the Scriptures and the circulation of such copies." Even Dr. Driver says that "it would not be inconsistent with the terms in which he (Ezra) is spoken of in the Old Testament to suppose the final reduction and com-

pletion of the Priests' Code or even of the Pentateuch generally was his work."

Whatever peculiarities may mark the literary phenomena of the Pentateuch, they can all be most reasonably and satisfactorily explained upon this view, without resort to the revolutionary and complicated hypotheses of the Radical Critics.

2. There is a second consideration too often overlooked. The radical theory passes over the great positive teachings of the Bible and fastens itself simply upon supposed discrepancies and difficulties. Now, in no sphere of knowledge are difficulties admitted as valid evidence against positive proof.

A few years before the discovery of the planet Neptune astronomers were disturbed by the unexplained aberrations of the planet Uranus and their apparent contradiction to great physical laws accepted as undoubted truths by men of science. Then the astronomer LeVerrier laid down this principle:—"It does not become a scientific man to give up a principle because of difficulties that cannot be explained. We cannot explain the aberrations of Uranus now, but we may be sure that the Newtonian system will prove to be right sooner or later." And, as we know, a few years later through the discovery of the planet Neptune the Newtonian system was proved to be right, and the aberrations, which had been a difficulty and stumbling block, yielded additional confirmation of the great Newtonian laws.

So we may say,—“It does not become a Christian man to give up a principle grounded in the divine revelation and confirmed and attested by the experience and in the consciousness of myriads of

Christian believers, because of difficulties which we cannot yet explain." We want more of what Paley calls moral fortitude, in the power to keep a difficulty in its proper place and refuse to allow it to disturb our confidence in ascertained principles. We, Christian men, know whom we have believed. We have experienced the reality and the richness of God's revelations of Himself; we have tested and proved that the Scriptures of the Old Testament are inspired by God, and we have the sure conviction that it, together with the New, is God's word, and that God's word cannot fail, and so we can wait in patience for the solution of the difficulties which may still perplex us.

While the victory is assured, the conflict may be long and severe. The most serious symptom at present is the indifference of many.

Do Christian people realize what is at stake in the present controversy? "We are fighting for our all," said Athanasius, when, almost single-handed, he maintained against the Arians the true and real Godhead of Jesus Christ. And we, too, are fighting for our all. For consider if it be granted that the principles and methods of the Higher Critics are valid, what must follow? The principles applied to the Old Testament must logically be applied to the New. Some, like Canon Gore, would place the New Testament on a different footing from the Old. The distinctions made are not tenable, as Principal Hodgson, himself also a Higher Critic, pointed out in a startling address before the English Congregational Union. Dr. Robertson Nichol says of Dr. Cheyne, the editor of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, that "a mind so eager,

so acute, so versatile and so laborious as his, must perhaps have felt it a positive necessity to apply to the New Testament the methods he followed in the Old." He did so logically and consistently and with what results the *Encyclopædia Biblica* shows. What has it left us but a wreck of the New Testament and a shadow of a Christ? Individual critics may deny this inference, but the inherent trend of their system is too strong for them. Truly, we are fighting for our all.

If faith in the Bible as the inspired and authoritative record of God's Revelation of Redemption is undermined, what truth of the Christian religion shall we be able to retain? And it is not doctrine only that will go, it is character, it is all that makes us great as a people. As Bishop Westcott said: "Nothing less than our national character is at stake in our regard for the Bible." "What is the cause," asks a French traveller (M. Michel, quoted by Westcott) "that the colonists of New Zealand, Tasmania and Australia are so wise and practical? In my opinion it must be attributed chiefly to their habitual reading of the Scriptures and their thorough acquaintance with their contents. Hence come the great ideas of the Fatherhood of God, of His righteousness, of His Providence, which shape those faithful and constant souls which we call characters. And to what do they owe their strength of principle if not to the Bible, their great teacher?" Do we, with the Bishop, "almost tremble as we hear the sentences (just cited), for in those very countries to which reference is made the authority of this 'great teacher' is even now imperilled. We are beginning to forget, under new conditions of life,

what has made England great, and what, as I believe, alone can keep it great."

What then can we do in this time of disquietude and drift? The practical remedy for the present distress is the inculcation and cultivation of earnest, prayerful, systematic study of God's Word. The great thing is not what men say about the Bible; but what the Bible says about itself. Let our study of it be most thorough and searching. Let us bring to bear upon it every literary and grammatical help. But above all, we need the guidance and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit; for, as Dr. Robertson Nicholl has emphatically said: "The Word of God cannot be understood by those who have no spiritual fellowship with the writers." "Nothing is understood in the New Testament (or in the Old) without direct spiritual illumination." To the humble and believing heart the Word of God will shine forth as the sun in its strength. He will know all Scripture to be inspired of God, because in his own experience he has found it "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." It will so search and try him, as Coleridge has said, and find him out to the depth of his being, that he will know assuredly, as St. Paul declares, that it is "not the word of man, but in very truth the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."



